

Sourcing Methods That Will Boost Recruiting Efforts

As our aging population moves into retirement, staffing becomes of even greater concern to the CPA profession. Because of the importance of recruiting to your success, apply marketing concepts and consider all potential avenues and creative approaches for attracting your ideal candidates.

First, name one person in your firm to own your overall recruiting process and one person to own recruiting for each position. Meet with the lead “recruiter” for each open position to brainstorm places you might find your ideal candidates. Use a variety of recruiting sources for each open position and mix it up so that you have “tried and true” methods combined with new, test sources to reach as many potential recruits as possible. *Too often, we see firms employ only one or two methods and then wonder why their results aren’t what they need.* If you want to recruit qualified candidates quickly, consider using a mix of these possible activities:

- Your local newspapers and their associated web sites
- Other internet recruiting sites including Careerbuilder.com, Hotjobs.com, and Monster.com
- The AICPA’s Career Center and your state society’s recruiting site if they have one
- State society magazines or newsletters
- CPA association career centers or web sites
- Alumni sites for the Big 4 and for universities and colleges in your area
- Professional recruiters, including considering retained searches which seem to be working for some firms these days

In addition to these traditional methods, consider implementing these other ideas:

- **Develop a career center on your web site.** Many firms work hard to drive traffic to their web site but don’t take advantage of the natural recruiting role it can play. Create a careers page on your site and use recruiting marketing text that clearly answers the question, “Why would I work for you?” Place links to PDF role descriptions that provide prospective candidates the information they need to understand the duties and skill levels of the positions you have open. Be sure to include a call to action that makes it clear how candidates should apply.
- **Enroll the help of your firm’s people.** If you haven’t already done so, create an Employee Referral Program where you pay your staff “recruiting fees” for referring qualified friends and colleagues to your firm that stay for an established length of time. Be sure to make the reward significant enough for your staff members to be willing to risk the rejection or alienation of their referral. If you feel like skimping, remember the significant fees you may be

paying professional recruiters! Document your referral program in writing and, as you begin to have experiences with it, you can make minor changes as needed.

- **Make friends with University and community college accounting professors.** Get to know those who work in accounting academia in your area and let them know about your firm's openings. Be sure that they know what type of candidates succeed at your firm and what you have to offer their students. Because they often know who the best students are and may be asked advice by current students and even graduates, they may be in a position to steer the best and brightest your way. These professors may also keep in touch with alumni, making the potential for referrals to experienced candidates a possibility, too.
- **Let your family, friends, and colleagues know about select opportunities.** You won't want to do this for every opening, or you'll risk burning out this source, but for the very strategic or hard-to-find positions, write a "[friends and family](#)" e-mail and send it to literally all of your professional alliances and referral sources, client contacts, friends, family, fellow church members, and others. In the e-mail, describe the open position(s) and the skills and behavioral attributes you seek in potential candidates along with the recruiting differentiators of your firm. Also attach your written position description(s) (minus the compensation information).
- **Explore social networking sites.** Web sites like LinkedIn, Facebook, MySpace, and even YouTube offer the potential of attracting staff. Your younger staff members can be a wealth of information related to online resources for finding quality candidates. Consider putting together a small focus group of staff to help supply input in this area and even to set up pages, shoot "guerrilla" video, and help position your firm for hiring the next generation.

Consider using a blend of both traditional and out-of-the-box sourcing activities to market your openings and position your firm for growth. Then, you'll be able to focus your energy on screening the plethora of candidates you'll receive!

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